



CHASE COUNTY CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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March 26, 2008

To Whom It May Concern:

I am writing on behalf of the Chase County Chamber of Commerce to ask you to keep Strong City on your list of stops on the proposed Northern Flyer project.

Considering the population of different areas was undoubtedly one of the main considerations used when determining which towns would be named as likely stops on the route. And while Strong City is quite probably the least populated community vying to be a stop on the route, there are some things about Strong City that must be kept in mind.

Strong City, Kansas is just two miles from the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve, the only national park in Kansas. Each year, thousands of visitors come to Strong City to visit the park. These "experiential tourists" are precisely the sort of travelers who would utilize Amtrak service to Strong City.

In fact, more visitors might come to the park if they could ride a train to Strong City, and then hike the newly-constructed Community Connection Trail to the park. The trail goes right past the depot, through Strong City and on to the north, where it connects to National Park property. Imagine the promotional opportunities that would come with this sort of experience.

Unlike Emporia, which no longer has a depot or any sort of facility that would serve as a depot, Strong City has a historic depot which is about to be restored. Transportation Enhancement funding from KDOT has already been awarded this project. When completed, Strong City will

Bazaar • Cedar Point
Clements • Cottonwood Falls

Heart of the Flint Hills

Elmdale • Matfield Green
Saffordville • Strong City

offer a beautifully restored historic depot for arriving and departing passengers. If Strong City is an Amtrak depot, the Tallgrass Prairie National Preserve has said they will offer transportation to and from the national park to visitors. No other location in Kansas would have something like this – ever.

Camp Wood YMCA is a popular summer camp for children from Kansas City and Wichita. Each year, hundreds of children visit the camp for sessions in the summer, over Spring break and long weekends. Imagine the convenience for parents of these children to be able to put their children on a train, knowing that staff from Camp Wood would pick them up at the depot in Strong City.

Finally, you must understand that railroad culture is a large part of the culture of Chase County, Kansas. Several locations in this county were, at one time or another, the largest cattle-shipping locations in the state and the country. Even now, trains criss-cross this county all day long, carrying cargo throughout the United States. Some of our small towns have daily train counts approaching 100. Chase Countians still work on trains and talk about their fathers and grandfathers who worked on trains. Many tell stories about waiting for the trains along the tracks and that their fathers would slow down, pick them up and take them down the line to play with friends. We would be some of the most likely folks along the route to travel by train again. We're used to it!

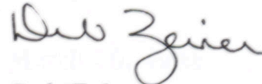
An Amtrak stop in Strong City, Kansas might not be recognizably important to you. But there are important economic, tourist and cultural reasons there should be a stop here.

We will do anything and everything possible to encourage you to keep Strong City, Kansas in consideration for a stop on the Northern Flyer route.

There are so many projects coming together in our area that would entice travelers to ride a train here to the Heart of the Flint Hills of Kansas. We have the national park, we have the funds and will soon have a beautifully restored depot, we have a hiking/biking trail from the depot to the national park as well as the offer of a shuttle from the depot to the national park.

Do not pass up Strong City, Kansas. This is a growth opportunity for Amtrak and for us.

Sincerely,



Deb Zeiner
Director

